

"The Man Who Didn't Believe in Love"

I want to tell you a very old story about the man who didn't believe in love. This was an ordinary man just like you and me, but what made this man special was his way of thinking: He thought love doesn't exist. Of course, he had a lot of experience trying to find love, and he had observed the people around him. Much of his life had been spent searching for love, only to find that love didn't exist.

Wherever this man went, he used to tell people that love is nothing but an invention of the poets, an invention of religions just to manipulate the weak mind of humans, to have control over humans, to make them believe. He said that love is not real, and that's why no human could ever find love even though he might look for it.

This man was highly intelligent, and he was very convincing. He read a lot of books, he went to the best universities, and he became a respected scholar. He could stand in any public place, in front of any kind of people, and his logic was very strong. What he said was that love is just like a drug; it makes you very high, but it creates a strong need. You can become highly addicted to love, but what happens when you don't receive your daily doses of love? Just like a drug, you need your everyday doses.

He used to say that most relationships between lovers are just like a relationship between a drug addict and the one who provides the drugs. The one who has the biggest need is like the drug addict; the one who has a little need is like the provider. The one who has the little need is the one who controls the whole relationship. You can see this dynamic so clearly because usually in every relationship there is one who loves the most and the other who doesn't love, who only takes advantage of the one who gives his or her heart. You can see the way they manipulate each other, their actions and reactions, and they are just like the provider and the drug addict.

The drug addict, the one who has the biggest need, lives in constant fear that perhaps he will not be able to get the next dosage of love, or the drug. The drug addict thinks, "What am I going to do if she leaves me?" That fear makes the drug addict very possessive. "That's mine!" The addict becomes jealous and demanding, because the fear of not having the next dosage. The provider can control and manipulate the one who needs the drug by giving more doses, fewer doses, or no doses at all. The one who has the biggest need completely surrenders and will do whatever he can to avoid being abandoned.

The man went on explaining to everyone why love doesn't exist. "What humans call 'love' is nothing but a fear relationship based on control. Where is the respect? Where is the love they claim to have? There is no love. Young couples, in front of the representation of God, in front of their family and friends, make a lot of promises to each other: to live together forever, to love and respect each other, to be there for each other, through the good times and the bad times. They promise to love and honor each other, and make promises and more promises. What is amazing is that they really believe these promises. But after the marriage -one week later, a month later, a few months later -you can see that none of these promises are kept.

"What you find is a war of control to see who will manipulate whom. Who will be the provider, and who will have the addiction? You find that a few months later, the respect they swear to have for each other is gone. You can see the resentment, the emotional poison, how they hurt each other, little by little, and it grows and grows, until they don't know when the love stops. They stay together because they are afraid to be alone, afraid of the opinions and judgments of others, and also afraid of their own judgments and opinions. But where is the love?"

He used to claim that he saw many old couples that had lived together thirty years, forty years, fifty years, and they were so proud to have lived together all those years. But when they talked about their relationship, what they said was, "We survived the matrimony." That means one of them surrendered to the other; at a certain time, she gave up and decided to endure the suffering. The one with the strongest will and less need won the war, but where is that flame they call love? They treat each other like a possession: "She is mine." "He is mine."

The man went on and on about all the reasons why he believed love doesn't exist, and he told others, "I have done all that already. I will no longer allow anyone to manipulate my mind and control my life in the name of love." His arguments were quite logical, and he convinced many people by all his words. *Love doesn't exist.*

Then one day this man was walking in a park, and there on a bench was a beautiful lady who was crying. When he saw her crying, he felt curiosity. Sitting beside her, he asked if he could help her. He asked why she was crying. You can imagine his surprise when she told him she was crying because love doesn't exist. He said, "This is amazing - a woman who believes that love doesn't exist!" Of course, he wanted to know more about her.

"Why do you say that love doesn't exist?" he asked. "Well, it's a long story," she replied. "I married when I was very young, with all the love, all these illusions, full of hope that I would share my life with this man. We swore to each other our loyalty, respect, and honor, and we created a family. But soon everything changed. I was the devoted wife who took care of the children and the home. My husband continued to develop his career and his success and image outside of home was more important to him than our family. He lost respect for me, and I lost respect for him. We hurt each other, and at a certain point I discovered that I didn't love him and he didn't love me either.

"But the children needed a father, and that was my excuse to stay and to do whatever I could to support him. Now the children are grown and they have left. I no longer have any excuse to stay with him. There's no respect, there's no kindness. I know that even if I find someone else, it's going to be the same, because love doesn't exist. There is no sense to look around for something that doesn't exist. That is why I am crying."

Understanding her very well, he embraced her and said, "You are right; love doesn't exist. We look for love, we open our heart and we become vulnerable, just to find selfishness. That hurts us even if we don't think we will be hurt. It doesn't matter how many relationships we have; the same thing happens again and again. Why even search for love any longer?"

They were so much alike, and they became the best friends ever. It was a wonderful relationship.

They respected each other, and they never put each other down. With every step they took together, they were happy. There was no envy or jealousy, there was no control, there was no possessiveness. The relationship kept growing and growing. They loved to be together, because when they were together they had a lot of fun. When they were not together, they missed each other.

One day when the man was out of town, he had the weirdest idea. He was thinking, "Hmm, maybe what I feel for her is love. But this is so different from what I have ever felt before. It's not what the poets say it is, it's not what religion says, because I am not responsible for her. I don't take anything from her; I don't have the need for her to take care of me; I don't need to blame her for my difficulties

or to take my dramas to her. We have the best time together; we enjoy each other. I respect the way she thinks, the way she feels. She doesn't embarrass me; she doesn't bother me at all. I don't feel jealous when she's with other people; I don't feel envy when she is successful.

Perhaps love does exist, but it's not what everyone thinks love is."

He could hardly wait to go back home and talk to her, to let her know about his weird idea. As soon as he started talking, she said, "I know exactly what you are talking about. I had the same idea long ago, but I didn't want to share it with you because I know you don't believe in love. Perhaps love does exist, but it isn't what we thought it was." They decided to become lovers and to live together, and it was amazing that things didn't change. They still respected each other, they were still supportive of each other, and the love grew more and more. Even the simplest things made their hearts sing with love because they were so happy.

The man's heart was so full with all the love he felt that one night a great miracle happened. He was looking at the stars and he found the most beautiful one, and his love was so big that the star started coming down from the sky and soon that star was in his hands. Then a second miracle happened, and his soul merged with that star. He was intensely happy, and he could hardly wait to go to the woman and put that star in her hands to prove his love to her. As soon as he put the star in her hands, she felt a moment of doubt. This love was overwhelming, and in that moment, the star fell from her hands and broke in a million little pieces.

Now there is an old man walking around the world swearing that love doesn't exist. And there is a beautiful old woman at home waiting for a man, shedding a tear for a paradise that once she had in her hands, but for one moment of doubt, she let it go. This is the story about the man who didn't believe in love.

Who made the mistake? Do you want to guess what went wrong? The mistake was on the man's part in thinking he could give the woman his happiness. The star was his happiness, and his mistake was to put his happiness in her hands. Happiness never comes from outside of us. He was happy because of the love coming out of him; she was happy because of the love coming out of her. But as soon as he made her responsible for his happiness, she broke the star because she could not be responsible for his happiness.

No matter how much the woman loved him, she could never make him happy because she could never know what he had in his mind. She could never know what his expectations were, because she could not know his dreams.

If you take your happiness and put it in someone's hands, sooner or later, she is going to break it. If you give your happiness to someone else, she can always take it away. Then if happiness can only come from inside of you and is the result of your love, you are responsible for your happiness. We can never make anyone responsible for our own happiness, but when we go to the church to get married, the first thing we do is exchange rings. We put our star in each other's hands, expecting that she is going to make you happy, and you are going to make her happy. It doesn't matter how much you love someone, you are never going to be what that person wants you to be.

That is the mistake most of us make right from the beginning. We base our happiness on our partner, and it doesn't work that way. We make all those promises that we cannot keep, and we set ourselves up to fail.